



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**FACTORS AFFECTING MILK CONSUMPTION AMONG SCHOOL  
CHILDREN IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF SELANGOR,  
MALAYSIA**

**ROOZBEH BABOLIAN HENDIJANI**

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**FACTORS AFFECTING MILK CONSUMPTION AMONG SCHOOL  
CHILDREN IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

**By**

**ROOZBEH BABOLIAN HENDIJANI**

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Food Service and  
Management at the Faculty of Food Science and Technology**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in  
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Food Science  
and Technology

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**July 2009**

**Chairman: Muhammad Shahrim Abdul Karim, PhD**

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Consumers who are getting more health conscious have encouraged the growth of healthy foods consumption in the Malaysia's market. One of the products that have been always closely related to healthy food is milk. Milk is being sold from hypermarkets to mini market in the country and it means that this product is getting familiar among Malaysians. However, the consumption of milk is still low. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the present beverage choice of school children and the other objectives of this study were to examine the most preferred flavor of milk that is available in the market and determine the effect of personal and environmental factors that influenced children's intention to consume milk. Knowing about the factors which affect on children's intention will help marketers in profiling the children based on the factors which encourage them to consume milk. Understanding the factors that will influence children to drink milk is important in order to increase the consumption of this product.

The study investigated eight factors that could influence children milk consumption. The eight factors investigated were attitude to sensory properties, belief to health benefits, packaging, consumption patterns, effect of family members, effect of friends, availability and advertising. A total of 400 students of 11 years old primary school children were chosen for this study. Several schools in different towns from urban and rural areas of Selangor were selected. Of the 400 students surveyed, 389 questionnaires were usable. Multiple linear regression, and cross-tabulation were used to analyze the factors affecting the intention to consume milk.

This study found that the preferred beverages of children were: drinking water, Milo, fruit juice, milk, yoghurt drink, Ribena, tea and soft drinks. Among different types of milk, children preferred flavored milk rather than plain milk. From the results of this research, personal factors were more influential than environmental factors. Additionally, packaging and advertising had less effect on children's intention to consume milk. To increase milk intake among children, marketers need to focus and strengthen the acceptability of milk and increase consumption by altering perception of milk advertisements. This study gives new insights on children's perception. It provides the profile of children who are likely to drink milk based on personal and environmental factors in different living areas.

Key words: Intention to consume, Social environment, Physical environment, milk consumption, primary school children

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains dan Teknologi Makanan

**FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUH PENGAMBILAN SUSU  
DIKALANGAN PELAJAR SEKOLAH DI KAWASAN BANDAR DAN LUAR  
BANDAR DI SELANGOR, MALAYSIA**

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Pengguna yang semakin peka terhadap kesihatan mereka telah menggalakkan perkembangan pengambilan makanan sihat di pasaran Malaysia. Salah satu daripada produk yang berkait rapat dengan makanan kesihatan adalah susu. Susu dijual di pasaraya dan juga kedai runcit dan ini telah menunjukkan ianya semakin dikenali di kalangan rakyat Malaysia. Walaubagaimanapun, pengambilan susu masih berada di tahap yang rendah. Oleh yang demikian, tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji jenis susu yang paling digemari oleh pelajar sekolah rendah. Penyelidikan ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis susu yang digemari di pasaran dan menentukan faktor individu dan persekitaran yang mempengaruhi keinginan kanak-kanak untuk meminum susu. Memahami faktor-faktor yang akan mempengaruhi kanak-kanak untuk meminum susu akan membantu pihak pemasaran dalam menentukan profil kanak-kanak berdasarkan faktor-faktor yang menggalakkan mereka meminum susu.

Kajian ini merangkumi 8 faktor yang mungkin mempengaruhi pengambilan susu di kalangan kanak-kanak. Lapan faktor yang dimaksudkan adalah sikap terhadap ciri-ciri yang melibatkan rangsangan deria, kepercayaan kepada kebaikan susu terhadap kesihatan, pembungkusan, corak pengambilan, kesan pengaruh ahli keluarga, pengaruh rakan-rakan, dan juga kesan dari pengiklanan. Sejumlah 400 pelajar yang berusia 11 tahun di sekolah rendah dari kawasan bandar dan desa di Selangor telah dipilih menyertai kajian ini. Hasil daripada 400 pelajar yang terlibat, 389 hasil kajian selidik dapat digunakan. Regresi linear berganda, dan penjadualan silang telah digunakan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi keinginan terhadap pengambilan susu.

Kajian ini mendapati bahawa minuman yang digemari oleh kanak-kanak adalah: air minuman, Milo, jus buah-buahan, minuman yogurt, Ribena, teh dan minuman ringan. Diantara pelbagai jenis susu, kanak-kanak memilih susu berperisa berbanding susu biasa. Daripada keputusan kajian ini, faktor individu lebih berpengaruh berbanding faktor persekitaran. Selain itu, pembungkusan dan pengiklanan kurang memberi kesan kepada keinginan kanak-kanak untuk minum susu. Untuk meningkatkan pengambilan susu di kalangan kanak-kanak, penjual perlu lebih fokus dan meneguhkan penerimaan terhadap susu serta meningkatkan pengambilan dengan cara mengubah persepsi melalui pengiklanan susu. Kajian ini memberikan pemahaman yang baru terhadap persepsi kanak-kanak terhadap susu. Ia membekalkan profil kanak-kanak yang gemar minum susu berdasarkan faktor individu dan persekitaran di kawasan penempatan yang berbeza.

Kata isyarat: Keinginan untuk minum, persekitaran sosial, persekitaran fizikal, pengambilan susu, kanak-kanak sekolah rendah.

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Last but not least, appreciations also go to my course mates and friends that helped me in completing this research. Also special thanks to my helpful friend, Mohammad Raftari, who helped me to refine this research.

I certify that a thesis Examination Committee has met on **17<sup>th</sup> July 2009** to conduct the final examination of **Roozbeh Babolian Hendijani** on his thesis entitled “**Factors Affecting Intention to Consume Milk among School Children Aged 11 in Selangor**” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the **Master of Science** degree.

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Date: 16 November. 2009

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of Study**

There is a growing demand in the market of food and beverages. This change is based on transformation in the structure of population, consumer attitudes and their intentions towards the products (Charlet & Henneberry, 2002). Understanding the requirements of different segments of the population will help us to realize closely what different segments of consumers are looking for in their preference and consumption of food and beverages. The key driving forces within the food and beverage market have been and will remain: health benefits of food (Hartog et al., 2006; Grunert et al., 1996), value of food (Alden, 2007), how the food is manufactured, convenience, suitability of packaging (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997) and so on.

Consumers' standard of living has a major effect on the changing of worldwide trends (Kowtaluk & Kopan, 2004; Regmi & Dyck, 2001). The tendencies such as socio-demographic changes (Warwick et al., 1996), consumers' health consciousness (Hartog et al., 2006), level of knowledge and household income, have an increasingly extensive effect on this market (Churchill & Brown, 2007). Those changes have revealed an increase in consumer requirements towards healthy food or diet food, particularly milk and dairy products. According to previous studies, dairy product consumption increase is due to contributions

generated by increase in income, population growth, price change, urbanization, changes in food patterns and following of western lifestyle (Dong, 2006; Pingali, 2004).

Small changes in nutritional intake, such as the increase in amount of dairy food consumption, can improve the nutritional quality of the diet and play a valuable role in health promotion and disease avoidance (Miller et al., 2000). Dairy foods are nutrient dense foods providing a high concentration of many essential nutrients comparative to their energy value (National Dairy Council, 2004). Milk and other dairy products are the foundation of dietary calcium, as suggested by dietary guidelines and public health communication. Milk is well known to be the most excellent source of calcium and calcium is often considered to be good both for the bones and for the brain (Sanchez, 2003).

In addition to calcium, milk and other dairy products supply several other nutrients, for example phosphorus, vitamin D (if fortified), protein and magnesium, which are beneficial to bone health but they are not familiar nutrients for consumers' perception which can be obtained from dairy products (Heaney & Weaver, 2003). Due to the high content of these minerals, overall nutritional value and relatively low cost, dairy foods are considered to be among the best nutrient food (Miller et al., 2001).



When consuming milk in the daily diet, it is important to find the association between personal and environmental factors with intention to consume milk. With these findings, helpful decisions and strategic planning can be obtained from the dairy market. Previous studies found that these relationships such as effect of physiological needs, food preferences, parental suggestions, peer pressure, media, social norms and personal attitudes on intention to consume milk (Kowtaluk & Kopan, 2004; Farthing, 1991). Besides the global trends like increasing of population, income and education, the Malaysian government has also carried out various programs to improve public awareness to change the dietary habits of people to promote milk in their daily intake (Dong, 2005).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Dairy products are the best biologically utilized source of calcium (Charles, 1992). Hence, increasing the consumption of milk may be the most helpful way to increase dietary calcium intake level among children. Malaysians consumed more dairy products compared with people in other Southeast Asian countries and this is because of growing urbanization and also increase in household income (Dong, 2005), but it is still unclear why Malaysians' consumption of milk is lower than the world standards. Low consumption of dairy products and especially milk in childhood cause some diseases like Osteoporosis, hypertension and in some cases obesity in adulthood.

Milk in Malaysia has been on the shelves of supermarkets for many years, but in recent years manufacturers and wholesalers have been concerned about the target market and they have been evaluating the significant factors in the consumers' decision making process (Hashim, 2008). Milk has also evolved into a meal or snack for children that is not necessarily relegated to “diet food” status, and is being positioned instead for its significant health benefits. This fact implies tremendous potential for future growth for milk consumption among Malaysians.

Therefore, this study attempts to determine factors that affect children's intention to consume milk. To achieve the purposes of this study, marketing actions, environmental and personal factors are few of the variables which were applied in this study. So, the research problem focuses on the information that helps to understand the effective factors that influence to increase milk consumption among children aged 11 years old in urban and rural areas of Selangor. It is still unclear which factors play a more important role in this matter and also to find out why the milk consumption compare with world standards is still low.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objectives**

The general objectives of this study were to determine the factors affecting intention to consume milk, to investigate how preference for milk compares with preferences for other beverages and examine the preferred flavor of milk among school children aged 11 of urban and rural areas of Selangor.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objective**

The specific objective of this study was as follows:

- 1) To determine the effect of personal factors that influence children's intention to consume milk in rural and urban areas of Selangor
- 2) To evaluate the effect of environmental factors that influence children's intention to consume milk in rural and urban areas of Selangor

### **1.4 Importance of Study**

Based on growing importance of knowledge among people, consumers are becoming more conscious in health issues including food intake. Accordingly, consumers' purchase intention factors have become more complex and unpredictable. Markets will continue to change and getting more segmented than ever. Market segmentation can help marketers to achieve and satisfy their specific consumers and promote better their products. The findings of this study would have significant implication on marketing research and is vital for dairy products companies to understand the complexity of children's preferences and consumption.

#### **1.4.1 Manufacturers**

This study will able to assist manufacturers of milk in understanding key factors that influence children's intention to consume milk. Factors such as packaging, advertising and quality are closely related to manufacturers. Besides that,

manufacturers can get the information and idea from the research to make improvement on their product and be more competitive in the market.

#### **1.4.2 Marketers and Advertisers**

Marketers and advertisers can use the results of this study to enhance their skill of segmenting their target market especially in milk. Besides that, this study also will help milk's marketers to know more about children behavior in the market. From the information and understanding, marketers could then come up with an effective marketing strategy for milk through better advertising and more convenience and attracting packaging. In summary, the findings of this study will assist marketers to find out the most important factors that will influence consumer's consumption decisions.

#### **1.4.3 Policy Makers**

Policy makers can sponsor legislation that protects vulnerable population from excessive or unfair advertising and promotions practices. Ministry of Education can paper to document and elucidate the consequence of milk marketing targeting children. They can engage in community education and act as powerful advocates for community health issues.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The present study aims to investigate factors that influence intention to drink milk among 11 years old school children. This chapter thoroughly reviews the current literature in order to provide a strong foundation for the design of the study.

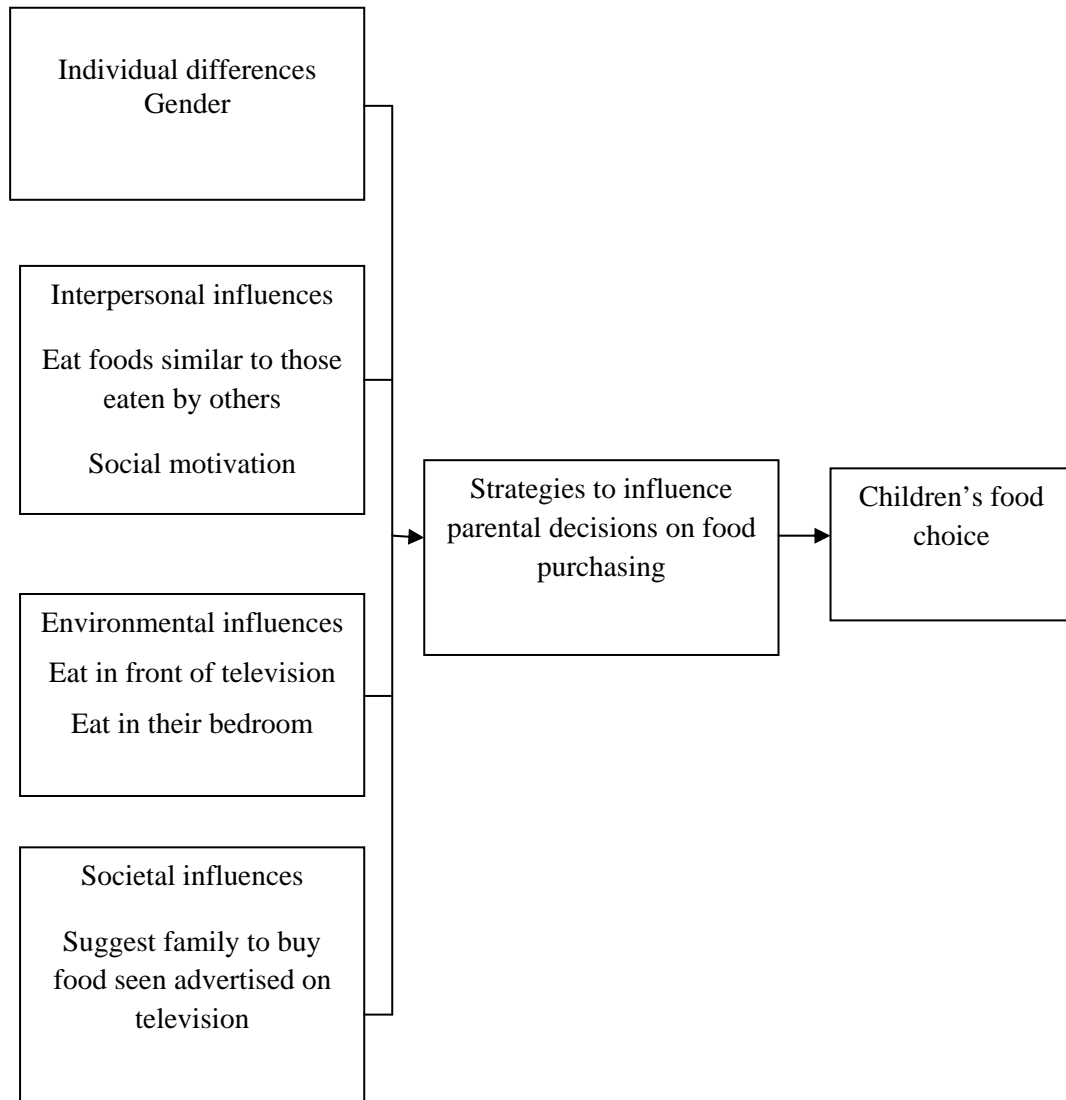
#### **2.2 Definition of Consumer Behavior**

American Marketing Association (Bennett, 1995, p.56), defined consumer behavior as "the dynamic relations of affect and cognition, behavior and the environment by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives". In other words, consumer behavior engages the thoughts and feelings that people experience and the actions in relation to consumption. It is also related to the environmental factors that control these thoughts, feelings and actions. These include influences from other consumers, advertisements, price information, packaging, product appearance and many others (Peter, 2002).

Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) stated that the study of consumer behavior focuses on how individuals decide to manage their time and money on consumption-related things. That consists of what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, and how often they use it. Additionally,

Kardes (2002) defined consumer behavior as the marketing of products and services based on the human reaction to products and services. According to Hawkins et al (2004), the field of consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. The expressions of consumer behavior are also described as a division of a large set of activities consisting of all human behavior. It includes everything that occurs as future customers for products and services become real customers.

More specifically, consumer behavior investigates the way individuals choose, purchase, use and dispose of goods and services in order to satisfy individual or family needs. Some of the influences that form consumer preferences and tendencies are internal processes, such as own thinking, feeling and desire. Other influences come from environmental factors such as social environment or physical environment variables which are economic, location, retail and promotional considerations (Hanna & Wozniak, 2001). A model of children's food choice in Figure 2.1 shows that the effect of some personal and environmental factors on children to choose a food. These factors show how children can influence their parents' purchasing behavior based on their preferences.



**Figure 2.1: A Conceptual Framework Related to Factors Explaining the Development of Strategies by Children to Influence Parental Decisions on Food Purchasing**

(Source: Marquis, 2004, p. 136).

### **2.3 Eleven Years Old Children as a Target Market**

Many studies have been conducted on food choice behavior and the factors affecting consumers to consume a product (Charlet & Henneberry, 2002; Mela, 1999; Furst et al., 1996; Randall & Sanjur, 1981). However, not much attention has been given to children's food consumption. Human food preference is determined by various factors which are conflicting (Shepherd & Dennison, 1996). These factors will be more complex for growing up children who are "unstable" and characterized by main physical and psychological transforms (Woodward, 1986).

It has become increasingly important to understand the children's consumption behavior, while being aware of their influence presence in the market place (Page & Ridgway, 2001). This study will focus on the primary school children of 11 years old in some selected primary schools in urban and rural areas of Selangor. School children are chosen in this research, because of their influence in the food and drink market. Children's food choice is important for a number of reasons. First, it determines dietary intake that promotes health, growth and development at an early stage of their life. Second, children's food choice will determine their future eating habits that will possibly be carried through into their adulthood (Neale et al., 1994; Dibb, 1993). In the school a child can have his/her choice independently, and peer group influence becomes increasingly important (Duff, 1999).



Eleven year old children have different thinking abilities and concentration level. They have been found to be active and independent customers (McNeal, 1992), highly aware of their consumption choices (Belk et al., 1982) and familiar about products and brands (Ward et al., 1977).

Marketers, manufacturers and advertisers have become increasingly interested in devising effective methods of reaching the young consumers' market, as the purchasing power of young people demonstrates continued growth (Hawkins et al., 2004). Achieving this plan requires a complete understanding of children as consumers: what they believe, what they want, and how they behave (Page & Ridgway, 2001). Recently, concentration has also been focused on the children market, comprising young people up to 12. Nowadays, young people, both children and adolescents, are richer and better informed than they have ever been. In developing countries, more than half of the population is under 21 years of age and therefore marketers can focus on these age groups. With the globalization of mass media, the trend of consumerism combined with modern industrialized societies of the developed countries has extended all around the world (Dong, 2006).

McNeal (1992) stated that children and teenagers are:

- A main market in their own right;
- An important market given their influence on parental household purchases;
- A market for the future of all nations;